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The Valley of the Upper Euphrates River and Its People

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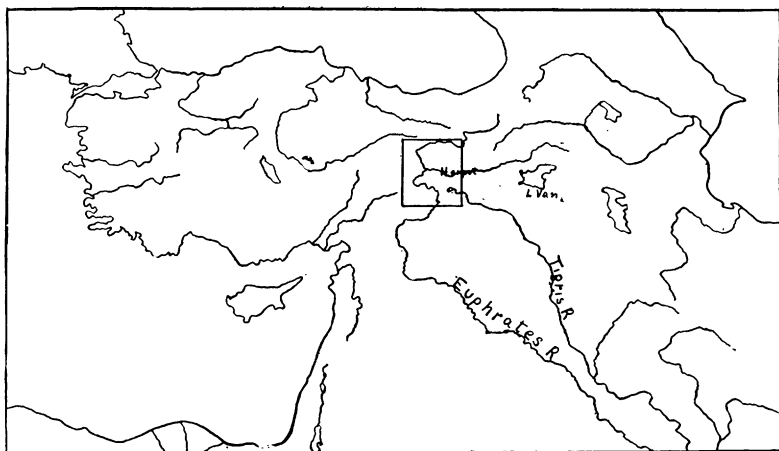
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THE VALLEY OF THE UPPER EUPHRATES RIVER AND ITS PEOPLE.

BY

ELBSWORTH HUNTINGTON.

On account of the mountainous character of the country, and the obstacles to travel imposed by the Government, many of the most interesting parts of Turkey are almost unknown to foreigners. One of these is the "vilayet" or province of Harput, about as large as the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut combined.



ASIA MINOR AND ADJACENT REGIONS.

It contains not only the fertile plains of Harput and Malatia, the rugged mountains of Shiro, and the wild fastnesses of Dersim, where the Kurds are still independent, but also the meeting-place of the two streams which form the famous Euphrates river. Elsewhere I have described in detail the great river and its cañon, the archæology of the region, and its climate; in this paper it is my purpose to give a general description of the geography, using the word in a broad sense to include the physical features, the inhabitants, and the relation of the two.

TAURUS MOUNTAINS.—On the south lie the Taurus Mountains, which run nearly east and west from the northeastern angle of the

Mediterranean Sea to a point south of Lake Van. The rather flattened, square-shouldered summits vary in height from 5,000 to 8,000 feet, and are separated from the waste-floored intermont basins by slopes which are usually steep even when covered with soil, and almost everywhere show ledges and cliffs of naked rock. In the very middle of the range is a great longitudinal valley, containing Lake Gyuljuk, which lies high in the neck of a great bend of the Euphrates river, and gives rise to the longest branch of the Tigris river. At this point the mountains contract from a width of a hundred miles, and a height of 6,000 feet or more at the passes, to a width of only thirty miles, and a height of but little over 4,000 feet, so that there is an opportunity for easy communication between the people of Mesopotamia and those of the series of elevated plains which form the floors of the intermont basins. The important road which here crosses the mountains from north to south forms the only much-used wagon route in an east and west distance of over four hundred miles. In ancient times this physiographic feature seems to have been as important as now. A comparison of the prehistoric mounds found in the plains just north of the contracted portion of the mountains, on the one hand, with those still farther to the north and at a distance from the low, narrow part of the mountains, on the other, shows that while the latter are of purely Thraco-Armenian style, the former—*i. e.*, those near the break in the mountains—by their size and composition, and by the bricks and burial urns which they contain, indicate that at this place of easy passes Babylonian influence crossed the mountains, which elsewhere interposed an almost impassable barrier.

INTERIOR PLAINS.—The plains of the interior, like those of the Basin region of the western United States, are typical examples of deformed basins, partly filled with waste from the surrounding mountains, under the influence of a somewhat dry climate. They lie in several longitudinal series, between great mountain ranges. The series which lies just north of the Taurus Mountains stretches from Alashgerd, north of Lake Van, to Malatia, and contains eight main plains. Those that I have seen are very smooth, although they have a general slope toward and with the streams which drain them, and the line where they abut against the mountains is so marked that, when seen from an elevation, it suggests a shore-line, with bays and promontories. I am inclined to believe that the basins, of which the plains form the floors, have been formed by depression and faulting or folding, and have been filled by waste

from the mountains, brought in by streams and deposited partly by the streams themselves, but more generally in lakes, as is shown by the uniformly fine character of the deposit in the centre, and by the marshy tracts which still persist as witnesses of the former lakes. Most of the population naturally centres in these fertile, easily-tilled regions.

ANTI-TAURUS MOUNTAINS.—North of the plains lie the Anti-Taurus ranges, the highest and most rugged of which are the Dersim Mountains, which, when seen from the south from the mountains around Harput, show a number of parallel ridges, which gradually grow higher toward the north. My one journey across them made it clear that they become much more rugged and, perhaps, more youthful in the northern portion. The southern ranges have rounded, gently-domed summits of varying height, with moderately steep, usually soil-covered slopes, supporting a growth of oak scrub, and are separated by broad valleys. The highest ridges, which reach an elevation of from 10,000 to 11,000 feet, present a crest-line of comparatively even height, with few detached peaks, but very many smaller elevations, producing a roughly-jagged, serrated sky-line. The tops of the mountains are naked rock, chiefly limestone, and the sides are, for the most part, barren ledges, bordering steep, inaccessible valleys. On the north the highest ridge of the Dersim Mountains falls off steeply 6,000 feet or more to the plains and valley of the western branch of the Euphrates. The wildness of the mountains has prevented the Government from fully subduing the lawless Kuzzilbash Kurds who inhabit them.

DRAINAGE.—Except for the strange angle around Lake Gyuljuk, where the branches of the Tigris rise within five miles of the great encircling curve of the Euphrates, the whole region is drained by the latter stream. Numerous wet-weather mountain torrents bear immense quantities of waste down their steep valleys to the larger, imperfectly-graded streams, which, in turn, give it to the Euphrates to use in building up the fertile plains of Mesopotamia. The main rivers flow characteristically in large, right-angled zigzags, where the east and west part parallel to the mountains is a quiet river flowing usually on or slightly intrenched in one of the plains, while the other part, transverse to the mountains, leaves the open valley and flows over rapids through a steep gorge or cañon. Almost universally the streams are so young that they have not yet had time to broaden their valleys and develop flood-plains. Accord-

ingly, as in all such countries, the people find it easier to climb over the mountains than to clamber along the steep sides of the rocky valleys. Communication is, of course, very slow and rare, and the effect of this is seen in the provincialism of the people and the great number of local dialects and customs.

THE CAÑONS OF THE EUPHRATES RIVER—EVIDENCES OF YOUTH.—Near the centre of the Harput vilayet the two main branches of the Euphrates unite and form the stream which has for so long been famous. It enters at once into a cañon, from which it emerges into the Malatia plain, only to plunge into the deepest and wildest



ON THE EUPHRATES, LOOKING AT THE UPPER END OF THE CAÑON THROUGH THE TAURUS MOUNTAINS.

of all the cañons. This immense cutting through the Taurus Mountains is, in certain places, almost as deep and grand as that of the Colorado, and the two resemble one another in many ways, although the Euphrates cuts across a folded mountain range, while the other is incised in a flat plateau. The extreme youth of the Euphrates is indicated by the numerous great rapids, the swift current, the steep walls and narrowness of the V-shaped valley, and the little hanging valleys which open into the cañon high on its sides. Below the mouths of these latter the main stream has cut so fast that the little ones could not keep pace with it, and are

obliged to fall into the river in a series of lovely cascades. These hanging valleys are interesting as furnishing one of the very few examples of the normal type, although the glacial type is characteristic of many northern countries. The latter open at a high level into steep-sided but very wide and flat-floored U-shaped valleys with meandering streams. Those of the Euphrates and the Colorado, on the contrary, open into narrow, precipitous, V-shaped valleys, where the river not only has no room to meander, but has not even a flood-plain, and washes the solid rock at the base of the sides. Other streams tributary to the Euphrates in this part of its course flow in steep-sided, narrow, new valleys cut in the bottoms of broader, flatter, older valleys. These seem to show that the Taurus Mountains have been re-elevated and the streams tilted in very recent geological times, so that the slope of the streams has been increased, and they have rapidly cut narrow valleys in the bottoms of the old ones.

CLIMATE AND IRRIGATION.—In climate the Harput vilayet somewhat resembles the State of Colorado. The long dry season lasts from the middle of June to the middle of October, and dries up all vegetation, except where there is running water. During summer the long-continued heat is trying in the lowlands, but on the mountains the nights are always cool. Spring and autumn everywhere enjoy a delightful climate, and the winters, with some snow and a temperature ranging from 10° F. to 40° F., are cold enough to be bracing, but are not severe. The rainfall of twenty inches or more is sufficient for all sorts of crops, but, owing to its uneven distribution through the year, irrigation is everywhere necessary. It is carried on in the most primitive way by small open ditches, and no attempt is made to conserve the supply of water, either by making reservoirs or by planting trees on the deforested mountains. Many, perhaps half, of the fields that are in use have no water supply, and are planted on the chance that the rain may be abundant; consequently in dry years the crops fail and there is much distress. Most of the larger streams are slightly intrenched in the plains to a depth of from twenty to a hundred feet or more, and, so far as I have seen, are never utilized for irrigation, although they might easily be used if several villages would combine. No one trusts his neighbour, however, and no one cares to work when he fears that the profit of his labour may be taken from him by violence or fraud. In the Malatia plain I saw a hundred square miles of the finest black soil lying unused, although surrounded on three sides by rivers, which might easily be turned on the land by

canals a few miles long. As far as possible, villages are located on the edges of the plains, where water is abundant and pure; but where the plains are too large for the centre to be reached daily by farmers living on the edge, villages grow up wherever there is water at the surface. In such villages some wells are dug. The size of a plain may often be gauged by the location of its villages.

THE DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS.—Previous to the Christian era the whole country, except the plains, seems to have been well wooded; but now the mountains are bare, except in the remoter districts of Shiro and Dersim, where there are so-called forests, which consist mostly of oak scrub, with some large oak trees. Even this growth is fast being cut away; and when it is once gone, new trees have great difficulty in starting, because here, as in so many other cases, the soil is washed away very rapidly, and the goats eat up the young sprouts, which might otherwise start new forests. Only the gnarled, inhospitable, thorn apple tree is able, by means of its spines, to defend itself.

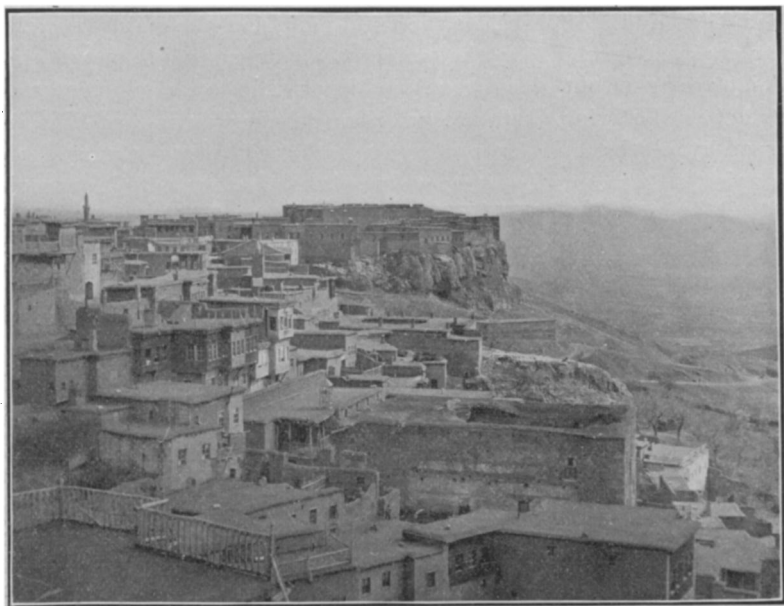
WILD ANIMALS.—Among the mountains but few animals are found, although insects and birds are abundant. Long-legged jerboas hop over the stony ground; hares are hunted during the winter; foxes and wolves are sometimes forced to approach the large towns by the stress of winter, and the latter are said to engage in fierce fights with the half-wild dogs which roam the streets of every city and town. Among the rougher mountains ibex are numerous, while in the more level regions there are a few gazelles. The people of the open plains and treeless mountains have a strange fear of the forests and of the fabulous snakes and wild beasts which they are supposed to contain, although the only dangerous animal is the comparatively harmless brown bear. He is held in great respect because of a certain impish hostility which he is supposed to entertain toward man. One night, when floating through the cañon of the Euphrates on a raft of skins, I decided to camp on the only available site—a little ledge of rock at the foot of an overhanging precipice. The Armenian raftsmen were much alarmed. "Don't stop here," they said, "the bears will come in the night and throw stones upon us from the top of the precipice." The only game bird that is much shot is the partridge, although wild pigeons, ducks, snipe, bustard, and other birds are abundant. Snakes are very rare, but turtles are found everywhere.

VEGETATION OF THE PLAINS.—The plains have probably worn nearly their present appearance ever since the dawn of history.

That of Harput, in the centre of the country, is fairly representative of the larger and richer ones. For four years I saw it spread out like a map at the foot of the mountain on whose top the houses of the city cluster round the ruined castle, twelve hundred feet above the plain. Each year the wonderful change from season to season was more impressive. No dweller in a green land like the eastern part of America can fully realize the beauty of the brief snatch of spring verdure which in this semi-arid land is gone from the lower mountains almost as soon as it comes, and stays on the plains but two or three short months. During the time of the spring showers, from the middle of March to the middle of June, the plains resemble our prairies, except for the universal background of mountains, which are never out of sight in Asia Minor. In the early spring broad stretches of waving grain are brightened by red tulips and big blue grape hyacinths, and later are gay with yellow mustard and red poppies. Occasionally unsown stretches are covered with a veritable sheet of purple, blue, yellow, red, or white flowers. Seen from above, these, with the far more numerous green grain fields and the brown ploughed land, give a strangely-checked plaid effect. Before the end of June the last showers have fallen, the bright flowers have given place to thistles and a few other hardy inconspicuous compositæ, the wheat and barley are turning yellow, and soon the plains assume the same dull grayish or yellowish-brown which the mountains always wear. After the long cloudless summer a few heavy autumn rains in October bring out such flowers as the yellow crocus, and the winter wheat gives some verdure to the plain, but in general the brown remains until it is covered with snow in late December or January.

CHANGES IN THE APPEARANCE OF THE VILLAGES FROM SEASON TO SEASON.—In early spring, before the leaves of the trees come out, the villages, with their flat-roofed houses of sun-dried brick, crowded together as closely as the cells of a wasp's nest, look like unsightly gray daubs of mud breaking the smooth verdure of the surrounding fields. Later, this ugliness is masked by the dark green of the encircling gardens, with their fruit trees (chiefly mulberries), their vineyards, and their slender, closely-trimmed poplars, which are planted in stiff rows, and form the only timber of the country. May and June are the time of greatest beauty, when the light green of the fields, the dark green of the vineyards, and the still darker green of the trees make the villages look like bits of Eden, set most of the time beneath the bluest of skies against a back-

ground of imposing brown mountains tipped with glistening snow. It is at this time that the real value of the omnipresent mulberry tree is evident. The leafy branches are cut for silkworms, and the berries are not only eaten at almost every meal, but some are dried, and either kept as a sort of raisin or powdered into flour for sweet-meats; while others are boiled to make molasses or *bastegeh*—a sweet leathery gum, which is kept indefinitely in the form of great thin sheets and is eaten like candy. When the mulberry season arrives the number of beggars in the cities is materially decreased, for



PART OF THE CITY OF HARPUT.

many of them go to the villages, where they camp under the mulberry trees and literally live on the fruit.

With the mulberries come the hot days of summer, when the villages are dusty green patches set in a frame of fields of stubble; then follow the gray days of autumn, when villages, trees, plains, mountains, and sky seem at first sight indistinguishable. And lastly, in the winter the villages once more seem to be what they are—clusters of miserable mud hovels, soiling the purity of the snow, and often shut in for two or three weeks by a benumbing valley fog which keeps out all the sun's heat and makes the plains inexpressibly dismal, although the higher mountain slopes above

the sea of fog are rejoicing in the most perfect winter weather, with a temperature ten or fifteen degrees higher.

I have spoken of the mountains and of the plains, but the most attractive region lies between the two, at the mouths of the little valleys where the mountains join the plains and send out numerous springs. Water is here abundant all the year, and so, in spite of the perfect chaos of boulders, pebbles, and sand brought down by floods, the villagers clear the stones away on the two sides of the channel and make gardens in the midst of a very desert. It is in such places that the finest vineyards, orchards, and vegetable gardens are found; and it is there that one realizes what a splendid country this might be if it were properly developed.

THE PEOPLE—KURDS—These rugged mountains and level plains, with their fine climate and splendid possibilities, are inhabited by three races—Armenians, Kurds, and Turks—the remnants of successive migrations. Of these races the most primitive is the Kurds, probably the Carduchi of Xenophon, who comprise three main divisions—Kurman, Zaza, and Kuzzilbash—differing in language and customs, and probably in race, although all are usually spoken of as Kurds. The Kurmans, in the few places where I have seen them, are an avaricious, suspicious people. Farther south they are partly nomadic, and have retained their own character and customs, but here among the Turks they are sedentary, and have assumed many of the traits and habits of their neighbours. The Zazas are more interesting, perhaps because I know them better. They are largely shepherds, and either live among the mountains or are nomads wandering to Mesopotamia in winter and to the high mountains in summer, giving a simple illustration of climatic control of mode of life. In character and habits they much resemble the third division—the Kuzzilbash—although they are much better Moslems.

THE KUZZILBASH—ORIGIN AND RELIGION.—Kuzzilbash means “red head,” but whether it was applied to the people whose centre is in Dersim because of their fair complexions, or because of the red turbans which they often wear, is uncertain. They seem to have come westward from Persia, and to have brought with them a language related to Persian, some traces, possibly, of Persian fire worship, and the Persian or Shiah doctrine of Mohammedanism. The orthodox or Sunni Turks consider this Shiite doctrine the rankest heresy, and regard its professors as even more contemptible than Christians. The migrating Kuzzilbash found in the

mountains a population of Christian Armenians, with whom, in course of time, they mingled, so that Armenian words and names are common in their language, and their religion has become a strange mixture of Shiite Mohammedanism and Christianity, with a trace of Paganism. Accurate information is hard to obtain, because, in talking with a Christian, they try to make their religion appear like Christianity. A prominent "agha" or village chief said to me:

We have four great prophets—Adam, Moses, David, and Jesus—of whom Jesus is the greatest. We have four holy books. [He used the word that is always used for the four Gospels.] All religions are but different roads to the same end—one long, one short, one easy, one hard. You go yours, and we go ours.

When I tried to talk about Mohammed he avoided the subject as though it were unpleasant, and others who were present insisted on changing the subject, so that I could learn nothing. The Kuzzilbash are said never to pray in private, but only when led by one of their sehids or religious chiefs, who have great influence among them. At certain times they observe a sort of sacrament, which closely resembles the Christian communion service. I have heard of this many times from Armenians who lived among them, but no competent observer seems to have witnessed it. The Kuzzilbash reverence all Christian sanctuaries and churches, and will even go into a church where service is being carried on and take part, kneeling and bowing with the Christian Armenians. To be sure, they will do the same thing in an orthodox or Sunni mosque; but in the latter case it is for fear of persecution, while in the former it is a matter of their own choice.

RELATION OF KUZZILBASH AND TURKS.—Wherever the Kuzzilbash live in open, easily-accessible regions the Turks oppress them. I stopped one night at a village whose inhabitants I knew to be Kuzzilbash, and after we were seated in the dark, dirty, mud-floored, mud-walled room of the agha, I addressed them as such, in Turkish. By the light of the smoking, ill-smelling linseed oil taper I could see that their faces looked troubled, and they all asserted that they were Sunnis, not Kuzzilbash. A little later, when my escort, a Turkish soldier, left the room, an old man pointed to the whip which the Turk had left on the floor.

"What is that for?" he said.

"For his horse," I answered.

"No, it is for men, for us Kuzzilbash," and he went on to tell me a long story of how the soldiers had of late years come every year at harvest time and beaten them in order to extort more taxes.

(To be continued.)

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THE VALLEY OF THE UPPER EUPHRATES RIVER AND ITS PEOPLE.*

BY

ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON.

THE ASHIRETS OR CLANS—FEUDS.—Among the mountains the Kuzzilbash defy the Government, and know no law except that of the aghas of their own ashirets or tribes. Petty feuds are continually in progress, so that every one carries a gun, either an old flintlock or a modern Martini. At times of feud only the priestly class of Sehids are safe from attack, and so the business of conducting travellers and trains of pack animals is wholly in their hands. The Kurdish ashirets closely resemble the Scotch clans of four or five centuries ago. In September, 1901, I crossed their stronghold, Dersim, but was unable to penetrate into the very wildest part, because there were so many feuds in progress that even the Sehids dared not venture into such an excited region. The first noon our party reached Pertag, three miles north of the Euphrates River, at the foot of the southern range of Dersim, where a series of splendid clear, cold springs gush out from the hot white limestone mountains and embower the village in trees and vines. We had to wait an hour or two to get a new escort from the Government. While we were sitting on a little mattress, which the villagers with characteristic politeness had spread on the bare ground in the shade of the useful mulberry trees, and were enjoying one of the watermelons, with yellow flesh and brown seeds, which grow so well here on the irrigated terraces, a man, hot and breathless, came running up to the soldiers' quarters. There was hurrying here and there, taking down of guns, mounting of horses, and hastening away. A ragged cavalryman unwillingly stopped long enough to say that three or four hundred sheep and goats belonging to the village had been grazing on the mountain side an hour's journey away, when some Kuzzilbash came down and drove them off, just as the Scotch Highlanders used to raid the Lowlands long ago. One shepherd was killed and the rest fled. As we rode away from the village we passed groups of Turkish villagers going out with their guns to take vengeance on the Kurds, whose black tents we later saw in the distance. The next morning we passed a village whose

* Continued from BULLETIN No. 4, 1902.

Agha had lately been murdered at the instigation of a neighbouring Bey or feudal lord. The Agha's tribesmen were on the warpath ready to kill and rob at sight, so that our single escort was exceedingly nervous. We saw no further signs of violence, but the Government insisted on insuring our safety by furnishing us with an escort of from five to sixteen soldiers.

At another time, among the Zazas, I hired a guide to go a day's journey, but after a few hours he said that he must turn back and wanted his money. I insisted on his continuing with us in spite of his frequent appeals, until at last we came in sight of a distant village. Then he got down on his knees and implored me to let him go, because if the men of that village caught him they would surely shoot him. His distress was so genuine that I paid him off and dismissed him after making him tell why they would kill him. Some months before the guide's fellow-villagers had stolen a girl from the village before us and given her to one of their young men, so that now there is a deadly feud between the two villages. Such events are by no means rare, and even take place among Turks as well as Kurds.

THE FEUDAL BEYS, OR LORDS.—Besides the Ashirets, or clans, there are in certain places genuine feudal lords, called "Beys," who have absolute power over the villages around them. They are sometimes Turks and sometimes Kurds, and their serfs may belong to either of these races, or be Armenians. Except in the wilder mountain regions, where the Kurds still resist the Government, the power of the Beys has been broken. Where they are still semi-independent they treat their retainers rigorously, and are said even to put them to death, but will not allow any one else to misuse them. One morning one of these lords, whose guest I had been, gave me as guide a man whom he had obliged to work all day in the wheat field and to turn the winnowing machine all night, and who was now to go with me as far as I chose, which was not far. Yet, when a villager nearby stole a mule, and soldiers were sent to recover it, the thief's Bey called out his men and was ready to fight, but the governor thought it wise to let the matter drop. The Beys have as many feuds as do the Ashirets. One on whom I called, said:

"Oh yes, we fight more or less. I and my two brothers lose eight or ten men every year in fighting with our uncle in the next village."

Some of the houses, although built largely of mud, are more or less fortified. At the house of the man who gave me the tired

guide I slept on a mud roof—the most comfortable place in summer—which was surrounded by a thick mud wall, loopholed for musketry.

PATRIARCHAL GOVERNMENT AMONG THE NOMADS.—Another form of government, of which I have seen but little, prevails more or less among the nomadic Kurds—viz., the patriarchal. Most of the mountain Kurds are shepherds, and in summer leave their villages in the valleys and build booths of leaves, or pitch their black goats' hair tents high up beside some mountain spring. The real nomads, however, migrate from the plains of Mesopotamia to the mountains in the spring and back in the fall, and live all the time in coarse, black tents, which are doubtless the same as those used by Abraham four thousand years ago. The head of the family, the patriarch, puts up his tent in the best place, and all around are pitched those of his sons, nephews, and retainers. He entertains you right royally with bread, which the women bake on heated stones before the tent, with milk, either fresh or soured to a refreshing beverage, with cheese and butter churned in the early morning in a sheepskin suspended from a pole, and with the meat of a tender kid, which he pulls to pieces with his fingers, and then offers the fattest pieces to the foreigner—the guest of honour. He rules his people absolutely; but they seem to be happy and prosperous, and are free from all interference from outsiders.

THE FOUR STAGES OF CIVILIZATION AMONG THE KURDS—VIZ.: (1) THE PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM; (2) THE CLAN SYSTEM; (3) THE FEUDAL SYSTEM; (4) ABSOLUTE MONARCHY.—Thus among the Kurds four stages may be found, and each is more or less dependent on the physical environment, and in each the character of the people is somewhat different. Lowest in the scale of development are those nomadic shepherds who are under a patriarchal government. They live where rain is rare, and the air warm, and leave the mountains when the inclement winter approaches. They seem to be brave and happy, but have no incentive to progress, and their code of morals in the broader sense is utterly different from that of civilized races. Each large family is a law unto itself, and comes in contact with its neighbours but little. Strangers are received and entertained, but they are also robbed, betrayed, and killed.

Next come the Ashirets or clans, originally nomads, as it appears, whom invaders have driven into the remoter mountain valleys, whence it is difficult to migrate every year, and where the rigour of winter compels them to build permanent villages of mud

and stone. The old nomadic habit still persists, but now the migrations are of only a few miles—to the neighbouring mountains, and the fields in the valley bottoms around the villages can be cultivated even while the fat-tailed sheep are being cared for on the grassy uplands. The clansmen, like the nomads, gave me the impression of being light-hearted, brave, and happy, even though they are always in danger. Their loyalty is to the village and clan, and they have an intense love for their homes. It was one of these people who said to my servant:

“Why does this man come here and ‘write the mountains’? We know that our land is the most beautiful in all the world. Does he want to tell his own people about it, so that they can come and take it?”

With the love for their homes has developed more of a sense of honour and responsibility than is found among the nomads. To be sure, they rob and kill at sight; but, nevertheless, their word can be relied on, and their hospitality is genuine.

Their care for their guests is shown by the somewhat misplaced kindness of an old Agha whom I visited three or four times at his lofty mountain camp. The first night when I went to bed he noticed that I not only took off my hat, but lay down to sleep without covering my head. He protested, saying that it was cold there on the mountains; the Kurds always kept on their turbans, and covered their heads, too; I should be sick. But I was obdurate. Sitting down on his mattress, at the foot of mine, he waited nearly half an hour, and then came and looked at me to see if I were asleep, which I pretended to be. That was what he wanted; getting a great quilt, three inches thick, he threw it over my head, and lay down to sleep, contented. He was determined that his guest should not suffer. I waited till he was quiet, and then pushed the quilt aside.

The next class, the feudal Kurds, are much like those of the Ashirets, but are often willing to take money for their hospitality—a thing which the others consider a deep disgrace. The Beys live near the edges of the mountains, and their people are largely employed in agriculture, although many sheep are kept. The serfs have learned the lesson of obedience, but it is to only one man.

The Kurds of the fourth class, who are under the absolute government of the Sultan, have learned the same lesson, although their obedience is not to one master, but to the many petty officials who make their life a burden. They live in the more accessible regions, and are avaricious, treacherous, and ignorant. The Ar-

menians have their quicker wits to help them: the Turks belong to the dominant race; but the Kurds are without protection, except as oppression goads them to resistance.

THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT — ARCHAIC CUSTOMS.—The other two races, Turks and Armenians, live occasionally among the mountains, like the Kurds, but more commonly they keep to the plains. They have been often described, and are quite well known, but it may be of interest to describe a few traits, or habits, which illustrate either the influence of natural environment or the slowness with which old customs are laid aside. The external conditions of life have for thousands of years remained so uniform that there has been no incentive to progress and invention.

CHANGES IN LAKE GYULJUK AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES.—An exception to the last statement, and at the same time a proof of its truth, is found in the region of Lake Gyuljuk, which has been already mentioned as lying in the neck of a great bend of the Euphrates River at the point where the Taurus Mountains are most passable. Although the narrow lake is now about twelve miles long and seven hundred feet deep, oral tradition and written record show that one or two thousand years ago its site was a plain, through which flowed a stream that disappeared by a subterranean outlet at the lower end. It appears that this outlet became clogged, and the water began to accumulate, forming a lake which year by year rose higher and higher, covering village after village, until finally the last village took refuge on a hill whose top was crowned by a monastery. Still the water rose higher; the hill became an island, and the villagers were obliged to take refuge on a broad gravelly fan delta opposite the island, on the mainland, at the foot of the steep mountains. In 1878, when the water had reached the monastery, it overflowed to the Tigris, and its rise was stopped. The poor villagers had lost their fertile fields, and, as almost no flat land remained, were obliged to satisfy themselves with the rugged mountain side, where a few terraces and less steep slopes were turned into wheatfields, while the steeper of the soil-covered slopes furnished a precarious foothold for vineyards. Even now the poor exiles complain bitterly of the greedy lake which has robbed them of their patrimony. The lake, however, was full of fish, which must be caught and used, since the scanty fields were unable to supply sufficient food. Some enterprising villagers from Gyuljuk, the largest village on the lake, and the only one inhabited by Armenians, went to Constantinople, and there learned how boats

are made. On returning, they built several—clumsy, to be sure, but immensely in advance of the primitive indigenous means of navigation. A few boats were built for neighbouring Kurdish villages; but these are now in ruins, partly because the Kurds are not so clever as the Armenians, and partly because the former have larger fields. The Armenian boats are kept in repair, and new ones are built. The fish are caught in nets at night.

During July, when the young fish, about five inches long, feed in great shoals along the shore, men, women, and children are busy catching them. A little rectangular pen of stones is built, extending three or four feet out from the shore, and at the ends of the outer wall two openings are left, outside one of which a net is placed so that it lies flat on the lake bottom, but can be raised so that the mouth covers the opening in the wall and the bag floats out behind. The innocent little fish come in through the openings, and are busily feeding, when they see two monstrous men before the only places of exit. One makes a great splashing, but the other seems quiet and harmless, so the fish all dash for the opening near the quiet man; but, alas! he has raised the net, and all the shiny little fellows are taken prisoner. They are put on strings and hung from racks on the flat mud roofs, where they remain all through August. In this hot, rainless season they dry without decomposing, and become like smoked herring. During August all the houses seem from a distance to be covered with great piles of brush, but an overwhelming odour forewarns the traveller of what he soon sees—that the brush bears fish, not leaves.

In still other ways the lake has changed the habits of the people. Thousands of birds frequent it—ducks, plover, gulls, pelicans, storks, and snipe—and are sometimes caught. On an island a few acres in extent, at the east end of the lake, among the rocks of a deserted and ruined Kurdish village, thousands of gulls lay their eggs, and furnish the people with a very cheap article of diet during May. Then, too, the people of Gyuljuk are far more in touch with the world than are their neighbours a few miles away, because of the visitors who come to the lake. Some day, under more favourable conditions, the beauty of the despised lake will make the villagers rich.

PRIMITIVE MODES OF TRAVEL ON THE RIVERS.—On Assyrian monuments of 1000 B. C., or older, there are representations of rafts made of inflated sheepskins, and of men crossing the water on single inflated skins, with which they supported their bodies, while they swam with their feet. At the present time such rafts

are the only means of navigation on the Euphrates River and its branches, except at some of the larger ferries. No attempt is made to go up stream, although in summer the current is very slow in many places. For thousands of years the habits of the people have remained unaltered. When they wish to cross the river to market a raft of skins is sufficient for the men, and the animals can swim alongside. If the river is high and dangerous, business can wait a week or two. In 1901 I floated two hundred and fifty miles on such rafts and saw no other means of locomotion, with the exception already noted. To be sure, I saw a raft of logs, on which sat almost naked Kurds, with strings of dried gourds around their waists for life-preservers and wooden tridents for paddles. But this was not a means of transportation; it was merely the easiest way of getting the logs to the place where they were to be used. At the main ferries there is what I suppose to be a relatively modern innovation in the shape of exceedingly clumsy, square-cornered wooden boats. They are low in front, in order that animals and, in the few cases where wagon roads have been built, wagons may enter. The stern is high and overhanging, with a high platform, on which stands the steersman, who manipulates the mighty rudder, which is as long as the boat. Two rough planks, with rounded handles, are tied to pins close to the front of the boat, and serve as oars. Of course these boats are carried far down stream before they can reach the opposite side, and have to be towed up stream along the bank—a very long and tedious process. Occasionally they are carried several miles down stream, or get stuck on sand bars in the middle of the swollen river.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOREIGNERS.—Another mark of the primitive character of the people is their suspicion of foreigners, who are known as “hat-wearers.” In floating down the Euphrates River with two American companions we passed Maden, the seat of a local governor. The advent of foreigners is so rare that the fact of our having floated past the town was reported to this official, who, in turn, telegraphed the news to the palace in Constantinople, and asked for instructions. From the Palace a message was at once sent, not to the local governor but to the Governor-General, telling him to find out who the “hat-wearers” were and what they wanted.

We floated down the river, because it was an opportunity for new exploration, and held out a promise, amply fulfilled, of affording interesting geological results, fine scenery, and novel experience. The people could not understand this, and failed to see why any one should

make such a dangerous journey, and especially why any one should all the time take notes about them, as they supposed. Accordingly, with true Oriental logic, they concluded that we had some secret purpose which must be opposed to their interests. Our own servants were equally unable to understand our purpose, although we tried to explain. I often heard them telling inquisitive villagers that they did not know what we were doing: "Perhaps they are going to make a bridge or a railroad. More likely they have a secret commission from the king. They say they are not paid for making this journey, but we know better; they are not such fools as all that. They know everything; they even know what is in a place before they have visited it."

This unlettered people's idea of geography consists in knowing the roads over which one has travelled; and they cannot understand how a man can know about a place that he has never seen, or why he should want to know, unless he expects to go there soon. These ideas about foreigners are almost the same as those which prevailed when Xenophon passed this way. America, England, France, Germany, are small cities, not nearly so important as Constantinople, near which they are located. All foreigners, or "Franks," are rich and live without working; they only come to Turkey in order to get richer and to make that country so much the poorer.

POTTERY-MAKING—A MONOPOLY.—Until the recent introduction of cheap European goods each village made most of the articles which its people required. The more difficult trades were carried on in the provincial capitals and other small cities, whose artisans often spent half the year in itinerating from village to village, taking their pay in grain, or butter and cheese. A few trades, however, such as pottery-making, have from time immemorial been restricted to certain villages. The village of Uslu makes most of the coarse red pottery used in the district, and attempts to keep a monopoly of the business, although good clay is found in other places. The women do all the pottery-making, while the men till the fields; and it is considered a disgrace for any man to be seen turning the potter's wheels, which are set under little sheds in front of every house. No girl is allowed to learn the art until she is married, for she might marry someone from another village, and so the monopoly would be destroyed. After a girl is married, and has learned to make pottery, she is compelled to remain in Uslu.

THE CUSTOM OF SACRIFICE—A REMNANT OF PAGANISM.—One more strange custom, common to Mohammedan Turks, Shiah Kurds, and Christian Armenians, is that of sacrifice—a remnant of the religion that preceded Christianity and Mohammedanism. One of the many places where sacrifices are offered, and the largest of the four or five that I have seen, is on Mushar mountain, close to the Euphrates River, opposite Malatia. Here, in a small cave, said to be the grave of a man called Hassan, a room has been made with mud walls, and has been furnished with many gaudy and some valuable offerings. Outside is a great square altar of rough stones, all covered with the gore of the scores of annual sacrifices slaughtered here by both Christians and Mohammedans, and cooked in huge copper caldrons hung from great beams. The horns are piled on another great altar, and the meat is often eaten at a sacrificial feast in the holy place, where the bones are thrown into a filthy little cave back of the main room. The shrine has no guardian, but is regarded with such veneration by men of all religions that the most valuable offerings are perfectly safe from pillagers.

Some distance below this shrine is another, the grave of a Christian girl, around which the Aghas of the Kuzzilbash village, at the foot of the mountain, are privileged to be buried, although the common people must lay their dead near the village. Close by is a large bush covered with fluttering rags. My Armenian servant tore a little strip from the bottom of his short striped tunic and tied it with the other rags.

“Are you sick?” I asked.

“Oh, no, but I may have a pain some day, and this will drive it away.”

Such holy trees or bushes are found everywhere by the roadside or on hilltops, as are also great piles of stones, on which the pious traveller throws a pebble and thus gains credit in heaven.

Mohammedan cemeteries—those most dismal, repellent, verdureless wastes of stones—are located close to the roads, because, as my interpreter said, when I was first in the country, the people want to be buried near the road, so that every passer-by may “tell a pray” (say a prayer) for them.

Even among townsfolk superstitious practices are very common. One night in Harput I heard what seemed to be the sound of merry-making in a house nearby. All through the night drums were beat, fifes were blown, and there was high, shrill singing and clapping of hands in time to it. In the morning inquiry was made as to whether the cause of the festivities was a marriage, a funeral, a

christening, or a simple feast. It proved to be something much more unusual. Some weeks before a woman and her boy had been bitten by a mad dog, and the woman had already died, although the boy showed no signs of sickness. That day, being the fortieth since he was bitten, was considered critical, so in the evening all the friends of the family gathered with drums and other preparations for a good time. One would naturally suppose that they had come together to rejoice because the boy was still living, or else to mourn because the mother had died; but their purpose was nothing of the kind. They came to keep the boy from falling asleep, because their superstitious belief is that if a person who has been bitten by a mad dog sleeps on the fortieth night after the event he will surely die. If he does not sleep he is safe. The boy did not sleep that night.

Such are a few of the characteristics of the people and land where the great River Euphrates reaches its full size. It is a land of great natural beauty and wonderful resources—a land combining in a rare degree the advantages of a superb climate, splendid though much-abused opportunities for agriculture, mountains full of ore for the miner, and streams which might furnish immense water-power for the manufacturer. Yet, in spite of all these advantages, two thirds of the people are scarcely more enlightened than they were 2,000 years ago. It is the living, not the dead, who need that the traveller “tell a pray” for them.